Prepping for the Black Friday digital demand

In preparation for Black Friday, retailers need to scale their systems, leverage big data analytics and tools and capitalise on an exceptional customer experience well before the manic shopping event hits. This is according to Gareth Hawkey, group CEO at enterprise retail software development company RedPanda Software.

"Many local retailers under-estimated the demand that Black Friday promotions would generate, and had neither the capacity nor the stock to fulfill the customer purchases. Systems didn´t scale as they should, resulting in timeouts and customer frustration, both in-store and online," he says.

Hawkey believes that the global move to mobile applications, and omnichannel shopping experiences, coupled with South Africa´s high mobile penetration rate, makes a compelling case for retailers to invest in smart customer experience applications.

"Your first step should be to entice customers to download your app," he urges. "Once customers have registered, you have their personal details, which enables you to push promotions directly to their device, allowing you to gauge interest."

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Big data, when analysed and interpreted through connected systems can be used to create personal profiles, hyper-personalised promotions, improve demand forecasting and enhance customer experiences.

The value that a retailer may lose in price discounts can be gained from the big data investment that Black Friday makes possible.

"Let's be honest. The only reason many retailers participate in Black Friday is because their competitors are. At least now, they are able to make a lasting investment that unlocks the real value from the entire experience," concludes Hawkey.

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